



THE GULFPORT HISTORIAN

No. 1-2

NEWSLETTER OF THE GULFPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

January, 1983

MEETING NOTICES

Everyone interested is invited, and urged, to attend our meetings. You do not have to be a member of the Society.

FEBRUARY 7 - 7:30 PM - GEMS Bldg., 28th Ave. S. at 53rd St.

ROBIN MITCHELL, a member of Company K, 7th Florida Infantry Civil War Reenactment Group will tell us about his groups activities in researching and reenacting some of the battles of that war. Other Group members will demonstrate Civil War uniforms and other memoriabilia, both North and South. Robin is Gulf Beaches Bureau Chief for the "Evening Independent", and is a member of the Board of Directors of the St. Petersburg Historical Society.

MARCH 14 - Same Time, Same Place

FLO FUSSELL, a life long Gulfport resident, and great granddaughter of James Barnett, the very first white settler in the Gulfport area, will be our guest. Flo has a wealth of personal and family memories of life in our area, going all the way back to 1868, to tell us about.

APRIL 16 - NOSTALGIA DAY - Chase Park, 28th Ave. S at 53rd St.

The day for old friends to meet old friends, and to make new friends. The day to talk over old times, and to talk about future times. The day to see pictures and other memoriabilia of Gulfport, Disston City, Veteran City and the surrounding area.

Nathan White, Chairman for the Society, and Councilwoman Yuvone Johnson, City Coordinator, with their committee are working on detailed plans. Many of our members will be asked to help - please do so. EVERY member of the Society should be on hand at least part of the day to help in greeting our guests. Full details will be mailed you later.

MAY 9 - A program will be announced later

JUNE 13 - Biannual election of officers. The report of the Nominating Committee will be in the May issue of the "Gulfport Historian."

IMPORTANT - - PLEASE!

If you know any little something about the past in Gulfport or in predecessors Disston City and Veteran City, or if you know someone who might know something, please call Frances Purdy at 343-3683, or Catherine Hickman at 321-7095. Even if what you have to tell seems very small or very unimportant to you, it might be the missing link in a bigger story, or it might be the clue to the solution of some past mystery. Don't hesitate to call!

THE GULFPORT HISTORIAN

The official Newsletter of the Gulfport Historical Society.

Editor - Willard B. Simonds
6218 - 10th Ave. S., 345-7938

Distributed free to members of the Society, City Council and other City Officials, to local news media, and others interested.

THE GULFPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society is a voluntary, non-profit association whose objectives are to preserve and to publish the history of Gulfport and the surrounding area.

Everyone interested is welcome to membership. Dues are: Individual, \$5.00 per year; Family, \$10.00 per year; Life, \$50 one time. The Society year is from July 1st to the next June 30th. You may join at the Society office, at any meeting, or by mailing dues to the Treasurer, 6218 - 10th Ave. S.

ORGANIZATION: 1982-83

President - Catherine A. Hickman
Vice President - Genevive Smith
Secretary - Ruby Walker
Treasurer - Willard B. Simonds
(Officers terms expire June 30, 1983)

Directors - Nathan S. White, Sr., Mary Atkinson, Judy Ryerson.
(Directors terms expire June 30, 1984)

ADDRESS OF THE SOCIETY

Hickman Realty, 3006 Beach Blvd. S.,
Gulfport, FL, 33707; 321-7095.

TREASURER'S REPORT

July 1, 1982 to December 31, 1982

RECEIPTS

Dues	\$115.00
White Elephant Sale	152.20
Misc.	1.00

TOTAL RECEIPTS \$268.20

EXPENSES

Membership Exp.	22.07
(Postage, copying, misc.)	
Historian, Sept. Issue	44.86
(Printing, Postage)	
Application for tax exemption	5.23
(Postage, copying)	
Notices, Oct. Meeting	7.25
(Printing, postage)	
Printing - Society stationery	22.15
Meeting refreshments	9.37

TOTAL EXPENSES 116.93

ON HAND, JUNE 30, 1982 576.70

Receipts, this period +268.20

Expenses, this period -116.93

ON HAND, DECEMBER 31, 1982 \$727.97

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Members:

We are well into our second year of existence and we continue to grow and to stimulate interest in the community.

At the City Council meeting, Jan. 4, 1983, the site selection for the new multi-purpose building was made, leaving Chase Park intact. We are grateful that our Council recognizes the historic value of Scout Hall and Gems Building. We believe that these buildings are priceless assets to the City.

I beg, I implore on bended knee! If we are to publish our history of Gulfport in 1985 we must have your help in re-searching and interviewing. Please don't sit back and "let the other fellow do it."

If you don't know what to research, or where to go for information, call me. I will gladly guide you, and refer you to other sources of help.

Sincerely,

Catherine A. Hickman, President

FROM THE EDITOR

The first issue of the "Gulfport Historian" was well received, both by our members and by others who received copies. I heard of quite a few complimentary remarks, to all of which I say "Thanks." It does worry me that I did not have any criticism, or any suggestions for change. Nothing is perfect, and someone must have some ideas for improvement. I would really like to have any such ideas. I don't promise to use them, but I will carefully consider all suggestions received.

The requests for articles and items by members and others did bear fruit. See articles in this issue by Agnes Conron and Walter Brooks. That's a good start - and lets have more. The more such contributions we have, the more successful the "Historian" will be!

RECOGNITION

Two local periodicals have recently carried articles about the Gulfport Historical Society:

The "Gulf Journal" a local weekly newspaper, on December 1, 1982 carried a long articles covering the work of our Society, and including some Gulfport history. This article was the result of an interview with President, Catherine Hickman.

"Tampa Bay History", a semi-annual bulletin published by the Dept. of History, University of South Florida, in its Fall/Winter, 1982 issue had a brief report about the founding of, and the objectives of the Gulfport Historical Society. It included a request for the donation or loan to the Society of any type of Gulfport memorabilia.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

No answers were received to the question in the last issue, so we are repeating it, along with a new one:

Q1 - Where was Disston City's Waldorf Hotel located, and how big a place was it.

Q2 - We have been told that about 1925 or '26 trolly tracks were laid in some of the streets in the Pasadena Estates area - between 61st and 64th Streets. Does anyone have knowledge of this? Any maps or pictures?

If you have any thoughts or clues about these questions, write or call the Editor, 345-7938.

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

Among the more important sources of information about any historical subject are the memories of people who actually lived through it. Next best are the memories of people whose parents or grandparents lived through it, AND passed their memories along.

A lot of work has been done in the area of interviewing people who have such memories of Gulfport by Frances Purdy, Catherine Hickman, Mary Atkinson, and others of our members.

Among those interviewed have been: Sallie Mann and Bob Weather, Flo Fussell, Sidney Brooks, Rose Ada Hudson, Loraine Watson, Mary Lou Gray, Carl Lowe, Jessie Brodsky, Stanley Sweet, Ida McLaren, Harold Anderson, Jo Pippen, Harriet White, Helen Perrault, Norman Huckins, Mrs. L. Lewis, Bart Bryan, Herman Berls, Florence Round.

Also, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Thomes, and Mr. and Mrs. Austin Huff have written their own notes for the Society.

In addition, tape recordings have been made of most of our program speakers.

There are a lot more people in and around Gulfport who have memories which need preserving. If you would help in this work please call Frances Purdy, 343-3683.

RECENT MEETINGS

The Society has had three membership meetings this fall:

Oct. 11 - Carole McQueen and Jo Pippen; History of the Gulfport United Methodist Church.

Nov. 8 - Leon and Eddie Noel; History of the Florida Military Academy, and its buildings which now house Stetson University College of Law.

Jan. 11 - Visited the St. Petersburg Historical Museum, and had a talk on local history by Everett Lehnert.

HISTORICAL CONFEDERATION

The Gulfport Historical Society has joined the Florida Historical Confederation, an organization sponsored by the Florida Historical Society. Its purpose is to promote cooperation and coordination among the 75 or more historical societies and museums operating in Florida.

OTHER GROUPS

(Within space limitations the Historian will carry, at no charge, brief notices for other local non-profit groups.)

GULFPORT LIONS CLUB will have a pancake breakfast at the clubhouse (Coronado or Del Rio Way off of 49th St.), Feb. 5th, 7 AM to 1 PM. Pancakes, eggs, sausage, and coffee or tea. \$2.00 at the door.

GULFPORT COMMUNITY PLAYERS will present a melodrama, "Dirty Work at the Crossroads". Jan. 28th and 29th at 8:00 PM, Jan. 30th at 2:00 PM, at the Community Center. \$2.00 at the door, or in advance at 3006 Beach Blvd. Some Society members are in the cast, Catherine Hickman directs.

GULFPORT LIONS LITTLE LEAGUE will present for the 29th consecutive season a complete baseball program for area boys and girls, ages 6 through 15. This league is in need of adult volunteers to work as managers, coaches, umpires, scorers, safety officials, and other jobs. Men or women, no experience necessary, the League will train. If you could devote a few hours a week for about 3 months to this work, call W.K. Jamison, 381-1362 (evenings) or Bill Simonds, 345-7938 (anytime)

OLD COUNCIL MINUTES

Member Agnes Conron has been devoting many hours to reading old Gulfport City Council minutes, looking for information of historic value. She reports:

"Researching Gulfport history - or any history I imagine - from minutes of the City Council can only result in a patchwork of information. It is fun though, and when combined with information from other sources will have great value. Some examples of actions of past Councils:

1921, Dec. 16 - Bayard S. Cook retained as city attorney for a fee of \$150.

1924, Jan. 8 - Judge Way retained for the same fee.

1921, Oct. 7 - Voted to get locks for the front door of Town Hall with 12 keys. Each recipient of a key to pay \$(uncertain) which is to be refunded upon return of key.

1922, Feb. 7 - Permission granted to the Michigan Society to play checkers and dominoes in City Hall at their meetings.

1922, April 21 - Ladies of the Presbyterian Church given use of City Hall Friday evenings.

1922, Sept. 5 - Voted to allow the Mayor to sit in on Council Meetings. (This was before the days of City Managers - the Mayor was administrative head of the City.)

1922 (Date ?) - Complaint of disorder. The Evening Independent item was confirmed after a protest. Meeting to demand better police protection.

1923 (Date ?) - Voted to pay for extra police and detectives.

1923, Nov. 6 - Voted to enforce the dog ordinance.

1924, Dec. 16 - Voted to prohibit driving by anyone under the influence of alcohol.

Almost every month city funds were transferred among departments to make up for overspending.

And so, it seems that the more things change, the more they really stay the same"

Agnes Conron

DONATION

Val Dutcher gave a talk on Gulfport history, and the work of our Society to the FRIENDS OF THE GULFPORT LIBRARY, at one of that groups recent meetings. Following that talk, the FRIENDS donated \$10 to the Gulfport Historical Society for use in its work. We thank the FRIENDS!

DEADLINE for the next issue of the Historian will be May 16th. Mailing is planned for about May 27th.

FIRE DEPARTMENT FUND RAISING

By: Walter Brooks

The City of Gulfport has always provided the Gulfport Volunteer Fire Dept. with the necessary equipment - to the extent of the City's financial ability. There have been times when there was simply no money available, and the department members were left to their own ingenuity to find the money necessary to protect the City.

The early history of the Fire Department is replete with examples of financial problems, make shift solutions, sharing our scarce revenue with other groups, and some "less then successful" fund raising ideas.

One of the earliest fund raising projects in the record was also one of those "less then successful" events. In 1932, when Sid Webb was Chief, the idea of promoting a motorcycle race came up. Money would be raised from program ads, admission tickets, and entry fees. Department members put in lots of time at hard labor grubbing out palmettos and grading a dirt track on Gulfport Blvd. between 58th and 59th streets. Ads were sold, the program was printed and tickets were sold. The rules were liberal, crowd control was non-existent, the winner's names are long forgotten. Total profits for all of this - \$1.05!

(Walter Brooks has been a member of the Gulfport Volunteer Fire Dept., for almost 42 years. He currently serves as Deputy Chief. Other stories about early days in the Fire Dept., by Walter, will run in future issues.)

WHITE ELEPHANT SALE

Our second White Elephant Sale raised \$152 for the Society. Held on Nov. 6, 1982, it was co-chaired by Colleen Camp and Mary Atkinson. Committee members were Helen Michaelson, Judy Ryerson, Genevive Smith, Keith Hickman, and Lum Atkinson. Many others helped with the work of the sale. The Society thanks them, and members and others who donated material to be sold. The sale was held along Beach Blvd. in connection with the Antique Auto Show.

RESOLUTION

Our Board of Directors passed a resolution "opposing any plan or action which would result in the destruction of either of the old historic buildings on the south side of Chase Park." Copies were presented to each member of the City Council and the City Manager. It was read at the Council meeting of Jan. 4th by Catherine Hickman, and printed in the "Gabber" of Jan. 6th.

GULFPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

6218 - 10th Avenue South

Gulfport, Florida 33707